

CHRISTMAS 2018

Message 1

December 23

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INTRO: It was about in September that I began to think what I should share at Christmas, if I had the privilege once more to speak on that day. It took me a while as I considered various options. I have preached through the birth of Christ sections in Matthew and Luke and have done various other messages. And finally I decided to put the Christmas story in its chronological order and see just what we were told about it.

As I did that, I began to work my way through it and I thought that instead of doing heavy study, I would go through it and comment on the passages just as it came to me. This is not a normal way for me to approach message preparation, but with some understanding from years of study, I thoroughly enjoyed this study. The only thing I found was I can't cover it all in a message, so I thought, well, I'll go as far as I get and then I have something to begin on next year if the Lord wills that I should preach then. And as we neared Christmas, since the Sunday before Christmas is close to Christmas day I thought I would do two messages; one on Sunday and one on Christmas day.

So let us begin by going back, not to 50 million years ago. There was no universe then. Do you know why it didn't exist then? Because, when you have a God like the God of the Bible, creating things does not take nearly as long as evolving things. So let us go back about 6,000 years. We are at verse 1 of Genesis 1 which says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And in chapter 1 we have the six days of creation, and on the sixth day we have God's crowning act of creation. He created a personal human being and He created him in a physical body. And then, from this first man He created the first woman; also in a physical body and also a personal being. So Genesis 2:7 says:

7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

But I believe it was before God created man that Lucifer fell and became Satan and we believe he took with him 1/3 of the angels. And I believe God created the universe and man to ultimately, justly defeat Satan and cast him, his demonic followers and his human followers into hell. So God created the universe and placed man in it on planet earth and God has never let any of mankind see Him in His entire glory. Man, to be the instrument God will use to destroy the devil and to bring everlasting glory to Himself, has to learn to live by faith. And the longer I consider that, the greater the life of faith becomes.

And the longer I consider man, the more I see how incredible man is. His potential for evil and good is so very huge. In each person there is a mind, and in the mind of those who commit themselves to God, God will destroy evil in the universe and He will do it in full justice, using those from among mankind who trust Him by faith to do it.

Well, we know the story, man sinned. The devil thought, I think, that he had won when he got man to sin, but he had not. God promised One who would be the seed of the woman and though Satan would bruise His heel, He would strike a blow to Satan's head (Gen. 3:15). And if you have read through the Bible you know there is prophecy after prophecy that says a Redeemer is coming. But year after year passed yet no Redeemer. Time passed. Adam died, but no Redeemer. We are at almost one thousand years after creation, and still no Saviour. The flood came and went, and still no Redeemer. Well, the devil never quit trying to destroy God's plan and His people. And the time came when there was only one family left that still lived by faith. And God spared that family, but drowned the rest in the flood. Then God started over with that one family.

Nations began to exist and nations rose and fell, and still no Redeemer. Israel came into existence and Satan hated Israel and tried to destroy her. **God started His own race of people through Abraham. We are now 2,000 years into this world's history, and still no redeemer. Through Abraham God started a nation of people, called Israel and Israel became a nation and kings, both good and bad came on the scene, and still no Saviour. We are now 3,000 years into this earth's existence, and still no Saviour.**

Prophets came and went, and still no Redeemer. During that time and later numerous prophets came along, and they prophesied of a Deliverer, a Redeemer, a Saviour; but still there was no Saviour. And then the prophets fell silent. It is now about 3600 years after creation and still no Saviour. And finally the last prophet, Malachi prophesied, and still no Redeemer and then finally even the prophets fell silent. Still year after year passed and still no Redeemer.

And after the prophets fell silent Antiochus Epiphanes came along and he desecrated the temple and offered a pig on it. For Israel, it can hardly get worse, but no Saviour comes to help them. It looks dark and hopeless. Then a strange thing happened in Israel. We go to Luke chapter 2. By this time we are some 4,000 years after creation, and here is what Paul says in Galatians 4:4, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law..."

So come with me to Israel. The time is around 4,000 years after creation. God had promised a redeemer, a Saviour, one who would come and rule Israel. This promise was given again and again and finally the time has arrived, and it is here we pick up the story in the Gospels, in Luke 1. We begin with the Lord's promise to a priest who served in the course of Abijah. There were 24 courses of priests who served for one week each, twice in the year.

So we begin at Luke 1:1, to look at the promise to Zechariah. Luke writes:

I. THE PROMISE TO ZECHARIAH

- 1 *Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us,*
- 2 *just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us,*
- 3 *it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus,*
- 4 *that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.*⁵ *There was in the days of Herod, the*

king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

8 So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division,

9 according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

The next time you read through the OT note the 24,000 priests of whom 24 courses of priests were set up to do the work of the temple. Now these priests lived in various villages that were evenly scattered throughout all the area of Israel. They would serve in the temple twice a year, six months apart, for a period of one week each time they served.

Now because we can determine when the course of Abijah served, and John was born 6 months before Jesus was born, it is concluded by many that Jesus was born in the month that fell in our September/October months. But few give recognition to the fact that each course of priests served twice a year, six months apart. I believe from this that Jesus was born in our March/April months. I believe He was born when the Passover lambs were born and He was born in the place these lambs were born, and he died when the Passover lambs died.

Well, on this particular year the lot fell on Zechariah to burn incense during the time his course served and we are now told what happened. We go to verse 10:

10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

- 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.
- 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.
- 14 "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.
- 15 "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.
- 16 "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.
- 17 "He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."
- 18 And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."
- 19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.
- 20 "But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

Well, here we have the promise of the birth of John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, and His forerunner. The last two verses of the OT prophesied of John. Now note that it is the angel Gabriel that brings the message. Gabriel is God's chosen angel to bring important messages to various people God chose to send a message to. And note what Gabriel says. He says that he stands in the presence of God. And it is God who has commissioned him to go to speak to Zechariah. Burning incense pictured prayers ascending to God. And Gabriel is the messenger with God's answer. We go on in verse 21:

- 21 *And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple.*
- 22 *But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.*
- 23 *And so it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house.*
- 24 *Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying,*
- 25 *"Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."*

Elizabeth was past the age of child bearing, but sometimes God does a miracle and he did here. And now she is with child. Try to imagine the joy in this home, and in the hill country of Judea where Zachariah and Elizabeth lived.

II. THE PROMISE TO MARY

But Gabriel is not done with bringing messages. Six months later, the Lord dispatches him with another message. This time to a young lady in northern Israel, in the Galilee area. You see, at this time Israel was ruled by Rome. The prophets had been silent for 400 years. How long is that? That is 150 years longer than the United States has existed as the USA. That is 250 years longer than Canada has been in existence as a nation. How many had given up on God's promise after such a long time? How many must have thought the promises of the OT would never happen? But Paul says in Galatians, that in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son.

And so we go to verse 26:

- 26 *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,*
- 27 *to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.*

28 *And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"*

29 *But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.*

30 *Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."*

How many young ladies will have wanted to be the mother of the long promised Messiah? I expect they heard about the coming Messiah and many wished they might be the one to bear the Messiah. But after so many years, and no Messiah, how many still had hope He was even coming? But amazingly, in northern Israel, far from Jerusalem, was a young lady who still had such a hope.

And in verse 30 we have evidence that Mary wished to be the one to bear the Messiah. The angel said, "...you have found favor with God." The verb, 'have found' is in the active voice. It tells us that she sought this favor from the Lord. She still had hope that He was coming. And there, suddenly, before her is an angel telling her she has found favor with God.

Let me remind us of something here. It will be like this when Christ returns. There will still be those who have hope that He is coming, though now, after such a long time, Christians are giving up on that hope and turning to a hope of making this world a better place.

Now I want you to consider something. Where in the land of Israel did Mary grow up? Well, she is in the Galilee area. She grew up around Nazareth. Why would God go to Nazareth to find a woman suitable to be the bearer of the Messiah? Why would He not find such a woman in Jerusalem? It seems to me from studying the NT that the most godly Jews in that day were to be found, not in Jerusalem, but in Galilee of the Gentiles! Amazing! They should have been the worst. God found a young woman steeped in biblical knowledge here. We will see that she was a godly young woman when we see what she expresses later. That tells me that most likely she was from a godly home. Her parents

must have taught her a lot about the Word of God, or saw to it that she was where she could learn much.

It always amazes me that Jesus spent most of His time on earth, not in Jerusalem, but in this northern area of Israel. It amazes me that He chose most of His disciples here. Why not in Jerusalem? Oh, corruption wants to begin in the high places. It is so in most Bible schools today.

We go on in verse 31. The angel now said to Mary:

31 *"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.*

Imagine now, a godly young woman who lives for Jehovah God in a nation that has for the most part forsaken the Lord. But she hungers and thirsts for righteousness. And she lives a godly life. And she has hope that the Messiah will yet come. And yet, when the angel stands before her, what must it have been like? Surreal! It must have seemed like a dream.

It is possible she is around, say 15 years old. She has been betrothed and she is preparing for a wedding. Maybe she has thought that when she has children, one might be the Messiah. She is waiting for the time when her bridegroom will sound a shout and she will go to live with her husband, and now, before she is married this angel stands before her. And he says she will be the bearer of the Messiah, and he tells her what to call Him. She is to call Him Jesus.

Well, in the language of the NT that name is Jaysous. In Hebrew it is Jeshua. It means 'Jehovah saves'. So we go to the angel's next words in verse 32:

32 *"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.*

33 *"And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*

From our Wednesday studies in Daniel and the messages in Ephesians 3 you will understand that the prophets did not

see the 2,000 year Church age. In the Ephesians messages we have learned that the revelation of the Church age had not been made known to the prophets before the Lord revealed it to Paul. When the angel gave this promise to Mary that she would bear the Messiah, in prophetic terms, in less than 40 years, Jesus would begin to reign here on earth from the throne of David in Jerusalem and that is what the angel here announces to Mary.

Can you imagine a young woman in the despised area of Galilee, getting a visitor from heaven and he says these words to her? You will have a Son. He will be the Messiah. He will be the Son of the Highest. The Lord will give to Him the throne of David, his father. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. He will set up a kingdom, and that kingdom will never end.

From what Mary says later we find that she knew a lot about Scripture. But how hard must this have been to digest this news? She would have a Son and He would be the Son of the Highest? How could this be? And the kingdom we know as the millennial kingdom will be set up by her Son? She has no high connections to Jerusalem. That is where kings come from. How can this be? No wonder she was troubled. Furthermore, she was not even married. She was a virgin. Verse 34:

34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

I wonder, how did Mary have the courage to speak to this angel? Maybe her words were tremulous. But she has to point out a fact to this angel. How can she have a son, she is not even married yet. Verse 35:

35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

Did Mary understand the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 which says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold,

the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel”?

Consider the theology of verse 35. We have mention made of the Holy Spirit. Here is the third Person of the triune God. And the Holy Spirit is the power of the Highest, and who is this Highest One? God the Father, the first Person of the Triune God. And the Holy One who is to be born to Mary is to be called the Son of God. There is the second Person of the Triune God.

So we ask, how could the Holy Spirit overshadow her and yet her Son would be the Son of God? Well, we could spend a long time here to dwell on the subject of the Triune God. The Holy Spirit is also God. Turn to Philippians 2. Consider here that the second Person of the Trinity, whom the Apostle John calls the Word before He became the Son of God, agreed to all of this before it happened. We'll read verses 5-7:

5 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,*
6 *who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,*
7 *but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*

Verse 5 literally says, "Let this kind of thinking be in you which was in Christ Jesus." When was this kind of thinking in Him? When He was in the form of God before He became man. And notice that He did not consider that having the highest of all positions was something He could not lay aside. He thought about it and considered this. So it seems clear that He agreed to this before He was born.

Recently I went through this passage in our evening Low German services. And I learned something new. Go to John 17 for a moment. Here we are close to the time when Christ will be killed. We begin in verse 1:

1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

- 2 "as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.
- 3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
- 4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.
- 5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

From the Philippian passage we learn that Christ emptied Himself of His glory. But when did He empty Himself? In John 17:5 Jesus said, "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." It would seem that before the creation of the universe, Jesus laid His glory aside. And after He died and rose again, Philippians 2 says that God graced to Him the name which is above every name, and that name is Jehovah, which we call Lord.

And when Christ was born, He looked like just an ordinary boy, a human being. His divinity was not to be seen. Yet the angels says He would be called the Son of God.

We go on in verse 36 with the angel's message to Mary:

- 36 *"Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.*
- 37 *"For with God nothing will be impossible."*

Do you have some impossible situation? Do you need to hear these words this Christmas morning, "For with God nothing will be impossible"? It is so. But note here, that it was six months earlier that this angel, Gabriel, appeared to Elizabeth, Mary's relative.

Now the KJV says Elizabeth was Mary's cousin. The NKJV says she was her relative. I think the word relative is more accurate. Darby and Young's literal translations say she was her kinswoman, or as we would say, relative. It is questioned how Mary could be from the tribe of Judah, but Elizabeth was in the tribe of Levi. But it often happened

that a woman from one tribe married a man from another tribe.

And then in this passage I wonder how much time elapsed between verses 37 and 38. How long did Mary ponder what she had heard? Were other things said that we are not told? You see, before God created heaven and earth He talked to the One we are told was the Word, and God the Father told Him what the plan was, that He wanted Him to lay aside His glory and take on a human body, and be born, and be crucified by wicked, sinful man. And the second Person of the Trinity said, "I agree to this. I will do it." We find this in Philippians 2:8 which says: *And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

And now the fullness of time has come and an angel appears to the woman among mankind, who is to be the bearer of the Messiah, and she too needs to agree to the plan before the Lord will proceed. The One known as the Word needed to agree to the plan before God could proceed. And Mary needed to agree before God could proceed. Freedom of choice is the only thing that assures God of true glory. And so look at Mary's next words:

38 *Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

When Mary said, "Let it be to me according to your word", she was saying, "I consent. I agree. I will do it." And Mary said further, "I am the maidservant of Jehovah." Now the word 'maidservant' is not the regular word for servant. It is the feminine form of the word *slave*. She is saying, "Jehovah is my master, and I am His slave. I am sold out to Him. He may do with me as He wishes. His will is my will. I am in agreement with His will." And then she says, "Let it be according to your word."

III. MARY'S VISIT TO ELIZABETH

Well, Mary has agreed to be the bearer of the Messiah. And between verse 38 and verse 39 a number of things must have

happened that we know nothing about. Think about this. She is a young lady, maybe an early teenager. How did she inform her parents about her state? How long was it until she told them what had happened? Now look at verses 39-40:

39 *Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,*

40 *and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.*

She is going to go to a place not far from Jerusalem, known as Ein Karem, a city in Judah where Elizabeth lived. Now it is quite a distance to travel from Nazareth to Jerusalem when you don't have a car. And I wonder, do you? What did she tell her parents? Did she tell them of her visit with the angel? How did they allow her to go to see Elizabeth? How would she have gone? Certainly she could not travel that distance alone? Well, there is a lot we are not told. And all of this was done in a very short time because it says she went in haste! But we are told what happened when she met Elizabeth.

Verse 41:

41 *And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

42 *Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"*

Now picture this scene. Here is an elderly woman. It was six months ago that she was promised a child. And here is this young teenager, and when the older lady opens the door, an amazing thing happens and she recognizes that this is a miraculous meeting. And she is filled with the Holy Spirit. And she spoke out with a loud voice. Now let us come to the present for a moment. Think with me again. How long have we now been told Jesus is coming back? Well, it is 2,000 years! And how many have given up on Him? But someday He will be coming back and it will happen!

Well, back to Elizabeth and Mary. The aged Elizabeth recognizes that Mary is going to be the mother of her Lord. And she is amazed beyond measure. And she pronounces a blessing on

the young woman who stood at her door. She said, "Blessed are you among women!" Of all the Jewish women who have wished for this privilege Mary was to be the one. Oh blessed woman!

Verse 43:

43 *"But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"*

44 *"For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy."*

45 *"Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."*

How did Elizabeth know that Mary would be the mother of her Lord? Think of these words. Elizabeth is from or married into the tribe of Levi. Her husband is a Jewish priest. Mary is from the tribe of Judah. And in this great darkness that exists in Israel, there are still some true believers. How did Elizabeth know these things? First, she is a true believer. She knows the Scriptures. But further, she was suddenly filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now I want to point out something here. Look more closely at verse 45. Elizabeth said to Mary, "Blessed is she who believed." The word 'believed' is not a present tense. It is not, 'Blessed is she who believes.'" No doubt she still did, but there was something she believed at some earlier time than this. And I see two possibilities. First, she was blessed because she had been a believer in her life up to the point the angel appeared to her. If she had not been a believer, no doubt the angel would not have come to her. Now if that is what the tense implies here or not, that is still true. If we are not in the practice of believing, we will not be used by God for things when He needs somebody.

But I think what is most likely is that she is blessed because she believed the angel when he came and told her what was to happen. And when the angel came, she believed his words.

So let us consider now Mary's response to Elizabeth. Verse 46:

46 *And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord,*

47 *And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.*

Many years ago when I was in Bible school I had to choose a theological subject to write a paper for the theology degree I was taking. And I chose to write on the nature of man. And the big theological issue I had to deal with was, is man a two-part or three-part being.

I came to the conclusion that man is a three-part being and these three parts are body, soul and spirit. And verses 46-47 here took some of my time. Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord." That is in the present tense. That is what was happening right then. Her soul was magnifying the Lord. The Lord all of a sudden was growing bigger and bigger to her. She had had a big God, as is evident by her faith. But now her soul was continually magnifying the Lord.

But when she says, "And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, it is a past tense verb." I recommend that before my soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit needs to rejoice in God my Savior. Life has with it many and various difficulties. It must be so. And it is a spiritual exercise to learn to rejoice in the Lord regardless of how outward circumstances are.

Now Mary reveals some very great truths here. She had rejoiced in God her Saviour, and her soul was magnifying the Lord, and we find in verse 48 why:

48 *For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.*

Almighty God had regarded the lowly state of His maidslave, Mary of Nazareth. Why was Jesus not born to some prominent Jewish couple of the tribe of Judah in Jerusalem? God went to a place of low esteem among the Jews. It was Galilee of the Gentiles. Turn to John 1. But not only that, the Lord went to a city called Nazareth. After Jesus entered the ministry, when the Lord called Philip as an Apostle in the

Galilee area, he told his brother Nathaniel about Jesus.
We begin in John 1:43:

- 43 *The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me."*
- 44 *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.*
- 45 *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*
- 46 *And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."*
- 47 *Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"*

Jesus is saying, "Well, well, well. A Jewish man who is clean inside. Can you imagine that!" Nathaniel had said, "Well, well, well. You are telling me something good can come from Nazareth?" But both were true.

So the Galilee area was not prominent in Jewish thinking and Nazareth was not prominent in Galilean thinking.

Now consider for a moment the premium God places on humility. Mary said, *For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant...* The original word translated 'lowly' is *tapainosis*. The verb meaning to humble oneself is *tapainow*. The noun, humility is *tapainophrosunee*. Recently I have given you various words related to the mind. I have mentioned that numerous NT words come from the word *nous*. In my understanding, that is the data storage part of the mind. Numerous words come from the word *phreen*, the active thinking part of the mind. And the word *tapainophrosunee* comes from *tapainos*, meaning not high and when speaking of the mind it means according to the Online Bible program, *lowly, of low degree, to be brought low with grief, depressed, lowly in spirit, or humble*. The second word the word *tapainophrosunee* comes from is *phreen*, the thinking part of the mind. And in our text, *tapainosis* speaks of a person of lowly state.

Now the word that God has *regarded* her lowly estate is *epiblepo*. It is a heightened form of to look. Here is the picture I get. God looked for a woman who would be a good choice to bring the Messiah into the world. And He looked down, and His eyes fixed upon a young woman in the Galilee area. Her dad was a humble carpenter. And when God fixed His eyes on her He said, "She is the one!" He regarded her lowly state.

CONCL: And so we will conclude for this morning and continue from here on Christmas morning, Lord willing. What have we seen this morning? We saw the long, long wait for the promised Redeemer to come. We saw that in the fullness of time He did come. In order for God to accomplish His purposes He had to wait for the right time and the time was right when Jesus was born.

We looked this morning at God's promise to Zachariah, that he and Elizabeth would have a son and that would be the one we know as John the Baptist. He was the forerunner of Christ. He was the first prophet to be born after Malachi, which was some 400 years earlier.

Then we saw God's promise to Mary. She was to be the bearer of the Messiah. It is really quite incredible when you think it all through. And after consideration, she agreed to be the mother of the Messiah. She then gave the words of Luke 1:46-55, called the Magnificat. And we were in the process of going through her words and will finish with those on Christmas day, Lord willing.